

Pleasanton Express Article

Weldon P. Cude – June 14, 2023

As population growth in Atascosa continues to rise, the County will continue to increase our responsibilities to ensure the safety of our residents. The Atascosa County Fire Marshal's Office is a Department of the County whose purpose is to enforce fire and safety regulations to ensure Atascosa County is a safe place to live and visit. The Office of the Fire Marshal is authorized by State Law and through the Commissioners Court. The structure of this Office focuses its work on fire prevention, fire investigation, emergency management, and administrative services. Our Fire Marshal is unique in that they also operate as the County Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) in addition to their role as the Fire Marshal. Fire prevention is essential for this Office to uphold; this goes hand in hand with educating the public about fire safety so that the public may be familiar with obtaining permits and following burning regulations to mitigate fire hazards. The Fire Marshal follows a fire code and issues building permits, and implements permitting fees before one can construct a commercial building in the County's unincorporated areas. Atascosa County follows the 2015 Edition of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1 and NFPA 101 Codes. To uphold effective fire prevention processes, the Fire Marshal's Office conducts periodic inspections of commercial buildings, facilities, and other buildings available to the public in unincorporated areas of the County. When a fire occurs in an unincorporated area of the County, The Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for the investigation of the fire and works with other local and State agencies when cases of arson arise. The Fire Marshal's Office also provides support to the 10 Volunteer Fire Departments throughout Atascosa County, works collaboratively with emergency service agencies within Atascosa County and investigates citizen complaints regarding fire and life safety hazards in the unincorporated areas. The EMC portion of the Office is responsible for planning, mitigation, and recovery strategies in emergencies or disasters. The Fire Marshal/EMC is responsible for protecting lives, property, and the environment during times of crisis. The Fire Marshal/EMC often works alongside law enforcement agencies, fire departments, EMS, hospitals, and community organizations, to plan coordinated and effective emergency responses. Devin Wilborn has served as the County's Fire Marshal and EMC since 2022. He has collective experience as a firefighter, EMT, and Deputy with the Sheriff's Office over the last 13 years. I'm thankful for the work of this Office, as safety is one of my highest priorities as your County Judge. Please know it is my obligation as County Judge and of the Atascosa County Commissioner's Court to keep our communities safe, to work effectively with law enforcement agencies, and to implement initiatives that protect the public. Together we are Atascosa Proud!